

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS**

1. A composition for protecting skin comprising sphingomyelin as an active ingredient.

5           2. Use of the composition according to claim 1 for inhibiting a skin aging.

3. Use of the composition according to claim 1 for inhibiting a skin photoaging.

4. Use of the composition according to claim 1 for curing a wound.

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5. Use of the composition according to claim 1 for improving a skin barrier function.

6. The use according to claim 5, wherein the use is one for rapidly repairing a  
15   damaged skin barrier.

7. Use of the composition according to claim 1 for treating an atopic skin.

8. Use of the composition according to claim 1 for improving an itchy skin.

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9. Use of the composition according to claim 1 for improving a softness of skin.

10. Use of the composition according to claim 1 for preventing rough and scaly skin formation.

11. The composition according to claim 1, wherein the sphingomyelin is derived from milk or an egg.

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12. The composition according to claim 1, wherein the sphingomyelin is hydrogenated sphingomyelin.

13. The composition according to claim 1, wherein the composition is a  
10 composition for oral administration or topical application.